

"Fellowship for all"

To the Editor:

I read with great interest the report of the annual meeting of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in the February 19, 1972 issue of the Journal (p. 385).

I was pleased to learn that the Royal College had decided to do away with the artificial dividing line between fellows and certificants. I was extremely disappointed, however, to learn that all one will have to do to become a fellow is to obtain a few signatures and pay a few dollars. This cheapens the fellowship and makes the F.R.C.S.[C] and F.R.C.P.[C] meaningless.

I have just been through the 1971 examinations of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. I was told, from day one of medical school, that if one wanted to get anywhere in Canadian medicine, one had to have a fellowship. I became even more aware of this when I started my residency in ophthalmology. I was told then that a fellowship was essential if one wished to receive an appointment in a "good" hospital and do some teaching.

Over the next four years, not only did I have to learn my own specialty, but I also had to keep up to date in general surgery, general medicine, and attend a weekly conference in general pathology, in order to be well prepared for the fellowship examinations.

I wrote both the fellowship and certification examinations, for one needs at least a certification to practise legally as a specialist in most provinces, and I did not wish to take any chances. I was successful, and was invited to the orals. The ophthalmology orals, which both fellowship and certification candidates took, were difficult enough, but the second day of orals in medicine, surgery and pathology, cannot be described — they must be experienced. I had a great sense of accomplishment when I learned that I had passed the fellowship examinations, but this feeling has been short lived because of the recent rulings.

I accepted the myth which the establishment in Canadian academic medicine had created, and went through a lot of hard work, anxiety and expense in order to obtain my fellowship. I am glad that my younger colleagues will not have to go through this experience in the future.

The establishment wonders why

house staff and medical students cannot accept the values and traditions that they have handed down. I did, and look what happened.

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By examination

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Legal abortion

To the Editor:

In spite of the technical and scientific progress that has been made through the ages, our world has always been and probably always will be a world of spiritual and moral confusion.

One author has written "In the times of Paul, the Apostle, everything was good, except God himself." Today, we would be justified in saying "Everything is good, except good itself."

When the legislators, to please a turbulent minority, broadened the abortion laws in Canada, one might have expected a strong protest from the medical profession as a whole, whose duty it is to preserve life not to destroy it. On the contrary, national and provincial medical bodies fell into step with the law-makers and even asked for greater liberalization.

The response of the C.M.A. was to change its Code of Ethics, to change the "old Greek laws" — laws made more than 2000 years ago by people whom we call pagans — because the ethics which these laws embodied were too strict for us. General Omar Bradley was right when he said: "Ours is an age of nuclear giants and ethical infants."

In my opinion, the C.M.A. was wrong in considering that the vote of the General Council represented the opinion of the majority of its members. In a matter as important as abortion and sterilization and a change in the Code of Ethics, the C.M.A. should have held some kind of referendum in which all the members would have been able to vote. The urgency was not so great as to preclude this.

In broadening the abortion laws, the legislator has bowed to the pseudo-arguments of a minority and accepted the fallacious reasons presented by the abortionists who maintain that abortion is not murder because the human fetus is not yet a human being, and that it is safer for women if abortions are performed by skilled people.

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
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